



SATURDAY, MAY 11, 1918

Quaint Old French Towns And Once Fertile Fields Now Area of Desolate Waste

What Battle Has Not Destroyed, Germans Have Demolished in Spirit of Wanton Vindictiveness, Says Noted Author in Word Pictures of War-Torn French Districts After German Occupation.

This is the second of a series of articles written in France by Elinor Glyn and being published, by special arrangement, in The Evening World. The third article will be published on this page next Saturday.

(SECOND ARTICLE.)

By Elinor Glyn.

PARIS, —I can never forget the strange feeling the sight of the glorious May sun pouring down upon the ruins of Lassigny gave me. The sensation was that one was in a dream—that it could not be true that the passions of men should so destroy created things, but that one would wake as from a nightmare. I climbed a huge bit of fallen masonry and tried to picture the little church on some peaceful Sunday morning before destruction fell upon it. The contrast was too cruel. "This is the result of fair fighting here," the officers informed me; "both sides are responsible. It is the effect of war—but wait, madame, until you see what the Boches have done deliberately from spite—then you can feel anger—wait!"

The Battle of Lassigny was terribly fierce—the country round is heartrending to observe. Here and there old seeds coming up for them-

selves are making green undergrowth between the millions of yards of rusted barbed wire, but no peasants are cultivating the land; it is lying fallow and useless, blood-soaked and barren. Oh, poor, beautiful France! Often on this journey through her lacerated communes I have met difficulty keeping back my tears.

After a perilous advance over newly mended roads we came to the part where the struggle was most desperate of all, "no man's land" being at some points not more than fifty yards wide between the opposing lines. Here there is hardly a tree standing, the scene is one vast waste, looking much like the alkali desert one crosses on the way to San Francisco. All that tangled stuff is barbed wire, and that dark spot on the right an entrance to a dugout. In the distance there is the ruin of a splendid chateau, completely shattered and roofless.

The road cuts straight through the labyrinth of trenches and communicating trenches of the front, second and reserve lines of both friend and foe, and wherever it crosses one of these abysses it has been mended since the battle with boards and earth, so that the going is like that on the roughest corduroy track out West or in the backwoods of Canada.

The strangest remains of occupation are lying about in the trenches of Lassigny—pages of books, bits of shells, broken morsels of guns, a mouth organ clogged with mud. And beyond one pool of turgid water, two old, well worn wooden sabots had been left, close to a rotting mattress at the edge of a dugout.

After this we went on to Crapeaumezill. Another scene of frantic struggle, and to reach it we had to leave even the security of the better mended road, and take to a track which I do not think many chauffeurs would have dared, but which the nice, dashing American boys who drove our car, turn and turn about, undertook manfully.

NEITHER CHURCHES NOR CEMETERIES SACRED TO GERMANS.

At one part of the German lines they had ruthlessly taken the grave-stones from the destroyed church here and paved the way for their guns, and we had an unpleasant emotion when the wheels of the car crunched over these monuments of the dead.

To desecrate tombs seems to be almost a pastime with these Germans, for many of the signed testimonies before the Commissions which lie on my table beside me tell of these things.

Here is one about Candor (Oise). A story of soldiers violating the graves of the families Trefon and Conster to look for jewels—and of still worse behavior in the church—these are the words of the witness:

"One day at the end of 1916 I saw in the cemetery five or six German soldiers in the act of throwing aside the lid of the sepulchre Mazier, which had been already shaken by them. They examined the interior and then retired. Our church was obviously pillaged; they went so far even as to tear off the Christs of silver which were fixed to the crosses, and I myself removed the tinsel drapery with which they had dressed up a Saint in derision!"

Nothing is sacred to these people, either of body or soul.

And yet the French tend their enemies' wooden crosses with courteous care, and one sees these groups near each separate battlefield tidily kept.

Before leaving Paris another friend of mine asked me if, should I be near her chateau at Villégny-Aumoni, I would look at it and tell her how it was. She knew that it had been sacked by the Germans while in the occupation of some people they had let it to before the war, but not to what extent was the damage.

When later in the day we entered this destroyed village and I saw just such another skeleton of a home as the one in the picture I really felt that I should not have the courage to describe it to its afflicted owner. Nothing but four walls met my view, rising out of masses of masonry and rubbish all blackened and burnt.

It is to be wondered that a rage of indignation fills these people's hearts against a foe so utterly wanton and cruel?

ONCE FERTILE COUNTRY NOW A MERE DESERT.

But now I must return to the battlefields of Crapeaumezill and finish my passage through them.

On each side of the track could be seen deep pits of uneven shape—as large as gravel pits in some places, others like the commencement of wells. These were the shell holes, terrifying sights, scattered in endless series over the barren fields. Consecutive batteries of artillery having to sallop over each other. How do they avoid falling in?

Some of these wicked-looking holes were filled with this hideous red water, the color formed by some chemical in the explosives, I imagine.

The panorama is most wonderful in this place because of the colossal expanse of French ground, and, as it were, in England by hedges or in

The Evening World Daily Magazine

Elinor Glyn Tells How Germans Destroyed French Towns and Maltreated Inhabitants

WHAT A GERMAN INVASION MEANS TO THE HOME DESCRIBED FOR EVENING WORLD READERS

dividual boundaries, so that you seem to see for countless miles over a devastated world, with no people to tend it, and no oxen or herds—only desolation and decay. Here and there groups of battered, ruined cottages or the crumbling spire of some old village church, breaks the monotonous desert, and now and then some implement of agriculture, which had served as a bit of barricade, would appear. And everywhere trenches—trenches and barbed wire, broken wagon wheels and masses of plates of curved iron sheeting, riddled and torn, which had been used for the bombproof shelters for guns.

Truly a battlefield, even after the removal of the dead, is a terribly impressive thing to see.

The trenches in this part of the French lines are most wonderfully made; they have a distinguished, finished look.

Everything the German constructs is vulgar, even these underground galleries—somehow their sandbags on the parapets look more fat and aggressive than the neat French basketwork cases filled with earth. I really believe that I would now know which trench was which without being told; so different is what I may perhaps call the art of work.

At one place the shell-holes, half filled with mud, made it seem impossible that we could advance, but a black Moroccan started up—apparently from nowhere—and helped to fill them with stones, and so at last we came out of this indescribable slough of despond and to a company of these slim, tall African men, who were skillfully repairing the worst

when one realizes that such malice can live in the minds of men.

There was a picture to look at! That mass of rubbish is the Hotel de Ville! And those few houses down that little street by which one enters the town were the only ones I saw not actually demolished. The rest were like the ones in the foreground. One's indignation mounts as one drives along street after street, until in the "Place" the climax is reached. Somehow that very antique sixteenth century house looked the most pathetic of all—it reminded one of some old and refined grandmother who has been insulted and ill used. It might, indeed, have been the home (although I do not suppose that it was) of the ancient creature whose story was told to me to-day. This is not one of the incidents given before the Commission on oath, but the person who told it to me lives near Roze and was a witness of the fact.

NOT EVEN THE OLD ESCAPED OUTRAGES.

A very feeble and suffering lady 80 years old, tended by a faithful maid, was too ill to get up when most of the rest of the inhabitants were evacuated. She could not leave her bed. So the brutal German captain tore the servant from her, saying: "Now you shall look after yourself or starve!" She was found three days afterward by the incoming French, almost dying, having been unable to assist herself even to procure food.

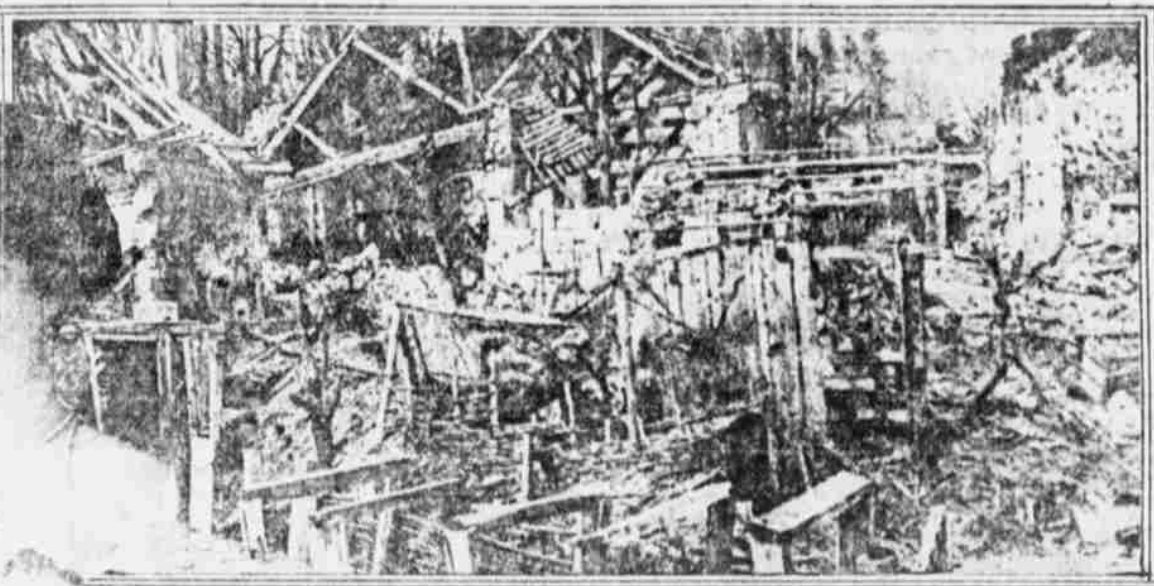
But now I come to the most shocking history of all, one about a young wife—it was taken before the Commission in April of last year. The witness was the Sub-Mayor and a Chevalier of the Legion d'Honneur.

Scenes of Demolition and Desolation, Scars of German Invasion of France

RUINS AT ROZE—TRENCH IN BATTLE-TORN LASSIGNY—ONCE FERTILE COUNTRYSIDE NOW A WAR DESERT



"THAT MASS OF RUBBISH IS THE CITY HALL OF ROZE, WHERE NOT ONLY PROPERTY WAS WRECKED BUT SOULS WERE TORTURED."



"HERE THERE IS HARDLY A TREE STANDING—THE SCENE IS ONE VAST WASTE."

damage, so that transports could pass on again soon, and presently we reached the first evidences of utter wanton, barbarous mutilation committed by the foe—the town of Roze.

"THE RUIN THAT WAS ROZE."

I begin with the description of the route from Noyon to Roze—far miles and miles just a track of wanton, barbarous spoliation. Do not the poor trees look helpless? Think of the toil to cut them all down!

One pictures the zeal of some vile commander ordering his death-brutes of soldiers to commit this vandalism. Imagine any civilized nation doing things like this to another country, no matter what circumstances of war! Are not the Germans damned for all time? Remember this deliberate mutilation was to serve no military purpose and that it must have taken calculation, labor and hours of work, the intention being to waste and destroy—a simple venting of rage and spite, which would be childish if it were not so fiendishly cruel.

Do any of you who read know the lovely old town of Roze? A quaint, prosperous spot, filled with houses of the great period of the eighteenth century, and many older still, one especially in the "Place" being a fine specimen of sixteenth century art, with carved oak beams and woodwork on its antique front.

There were many manufactories also of sugar and other things, and the whole place was a rich centre of the country round. I must ascertain the exact number of its inhabitants before the war so that you may judge of the size, but to the eye now, in its deserted loneliness and ruin, it appears a fairly large country town.

A sensation of blank astonishment comes over one as one enters it. One can hardly believe one's eyes. If you do not know Roze itself, many of you probably have motored through just such other dear little old world French towns, with their dignified Hotels de Ville, their "places," their well-built residences of charming architecture, and all self-respecting, prosperous and proud.

Try to call up the picture of this Roze as it looks now, with almost every building gutted and roofless, some with the fronts blown off, presenting the appearance of doll's houses when the children who played with them have been naughty and smashed up all they contained!

I had seen a house put in half in America, and one-half rolled on huge rollers to some situation a little further on. You must all have seen this—you who read, well, picture it, but with complete destruction inside—beds falling through the floors, an indescribable conglomeration of furniture and masonry and rubbish. Tattered curtains fluttering from windows—every vest of domestic possession broken by human hands with hammers and iron staves, when the pulverizing by bombs placed in the cellars was not complete enough for these demonic ends! A silver gown through one

This is his statement. I feel that I would rather give a literal translation of it, because I cannot find words of my own:

"During the first German occupation, which commenced on the 30th of August, 1914, I undertook the functions of Mayor. The pillage was general, and was particularly severe in the houses which had been abandoned. The sugar manufactory and the property of Monsieur Labruyere of the Faubourg Sainte Gilles were deliberately burnt. On the 6th or 7th of September two soldiers belonging to the group which appeared to be

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WITH the Third Liberty Loan bubbling over the top like a tea kettle boiling to the ears, lots of Americans are getting round-shouldered from patting themselves on the shoulderblades. Of course they deserve a service stripe on their old bank rolls. But why throw hilarious contortions because you have merely done your duty? There are some patriots who think they are entitled to wear a service star pinned on their four-button vest because their sisters and aunts are knitting ear muffs and portieres for the soldiers. Other stay-at-homes are taking lessons in acrobatics so that they can get in back of themselves and pat themselves on the suspenders because they obeyed Mr. Hoover last winter.

The only sacrifice Mr. Hoover asked of the fester-around-the-homers was to eat chicken instead of meat. If that is a sacrifice we'll give six more encores. You can play that chicken tune again by request. Still some birds want to hang out a service flag for their appetites because they scoffed chicken all winter instead of beef. The eagle is our national bird but the chicken makes a good understudy on the programme. And the guy who thinks he has oversubscribed his bit by scoffing chicken is exceeding his quota of fatheaddom.

A little isn't a bit especially when it's chicken. Wait until we get down to sinking a mean tooth into a saucy croquette like they are doing in Berlin; then we will have something to wave our star spangled elbows about.

Over there they don't have any chicken to eat for their country. Germany is divided into two classes—the Junkers and the Junk. The Junkers are the fish who started the war, and the Junk is what is left.

There is no one who possesses a home who would resent its destruction. A home is a place saturated with memories, whether it is great or small—whether built by a man's own hands at the side of a mining camp, or constructed by the cleverest masons for a rich seigneur. There is that sense of possession about it—"the thing is mine"—and when this sense of possession has been ennobled by sentiment and cemented by tradition for hundreds of years, it becomes almost part of a family's religion, this pride in the home.

And now we get back to Roze! And I want you to stand with me in imagination in the "Place."

There is an absolute silence, and, beyond ourselves, there is no living thing. In front of us is the very old house and beside us the Hotel de Ville—both gutted and mutilated—while across the way, there on the left, is some one's home with shutters closed—perhaps to conceal that there are no floors left within! It is all very melancholy, and I am sure that, with me, you will be glad to leave.

But what is that moving away there down that street leading out of the town? Surely, it is a peasant woman—she must be 70 years old at least! Yes, she comes toward us with faltering steps, her features stamped with a haunting fear—she passes on—and we see her enter a battered cottage, the roof of which is gone, all but the part which covers one small room. And we are told that she lives there alone; she cannot be persuaded to leave, because this tiny shattered structure means to her, even in its desolation, all that remains of that sacred place, her HOME!

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Old and Defenseless Tortured, Homes Sacked and Ruined and Families Torn Apart

No Outrage Too Cruel for Perpetration by Invaders—Demolition of Homes Only One Step in Germany's "Thoroughness" When Subjecting Town to "Frightfulness."

especially given to pillage, came to the house of one of our citizens in the middle of the night—Monsieur Colombier—a one-armed man. They asked him to direct them to a certain house. To get rid of them he replied, "I am alone—I cannot leave, go higher up." They then entered the premises of Monsieur Hesage. Overcome with terror, he tried to escape by his garden, but he was caught and slaughtered.

"The soldiers spying Colombier, who was now also endeavoring to save himself, secured him and killed him too. Nearly, at the same time, two other soldiers penetrated into the home of Monsieur and Madame XX., a married couple living in a house situated in the road leading from Roze to Carrequis. They captured the husband and threw him out of the door. Then they attacked the wife, a young woman of about thirty years."

Very often it has been proven that these kinds of outrages have been committed by German officers—or, if not, by subordinates acting under orders, but in this case the men were common soldiers.

The witness goes to tell of the personal treatment he received, having three times been placed against a wall to be shot, under the lying pretext that some of the inhabitants had fired at the soldiers. He was kept there, expecting death at each moment, and one occasion for three hours—imagine the cruel strain of that!—and the last time an officer held him for an hour, after having said: "Come, Monsieur le Maire, that you may be shot!"

The witness further states that what damage the exigencies of war

had done to Roze was quite remarkable, but the Germans deliberately demolished the houses, destroyed the manufactures and cut down the fruit trees, while they collected and mutilated all the implements of agriculture.

HOMES THAT ARE "NO MORE."
Another witness before the Commission tells of the heartrending scenes when the young girls were torn from their mothers and driven off—no one knew for what purpose nor to what destination. Every one who could do any work was taken, only the very aged and the babies left. Where are they now—the poor people? Alas, who can tell! Think of the aching hearts of the mothers away from their little ones, unaware if they are living or dead!

The brutes then finished by blowing up the church and the Hotel de Ville, and plundering every remaining house, while they rendered the furnaces of the bakers useless and destroyed the conduits of water for the town to insure starvation and thirst for the wretched weaker ones they had not thought it worth while to carry into slavery!

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Many a Patriot Hates Sacrifice

Some Birds Want to Hang Out a Service Flag for Their Appetites Because They Had Chicken All Winter Instead of Beef—Wait Until We Get Down to Sinking a Tooth Into a Saucy Croquette Like They Are Doing in Berlin.

By Arthur ("Bugs") Baer

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WITH the Third Liberty Loan bubbling over the top like a tea kettle boiling to the ears, lots of Americans are getting round-shouldered from patting themselves on the shoulderblades. Of course they deserve a service stripe on their old bank rolls. But why throw hilarious contortions because you have merely done your duty? There are some patriots who think they are entitled to wear a service star pinned on their four-button vest because their sisters and aunts are knitting ear muffs and portieres for the soldiers. Other stay-at-homes are taking lessons in acrobatics so that they can get in back of themselves and pat themselves on the suspenders because they obeyed Mr. Hoover last winter.

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